

WEISBERG, CHARLES

LEVY, RACHEL

DRAWER 6A

FORGERIES

71.2009.085.05533



# **Lincoln Forgeries**

**Charles Weisberg**

**Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources**

**From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection**

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1938

Dear Dr. Warren:

I am sorry to have delayed replying to your telegram and letter, but I frankly can not afford to send telegrams, and I put off writing a letter until I could see Miss Levy. Your reply was the first to reach me here, and it is my impression that your reply to her was also the first.

I say "my impression"; for curiously enough, she went off to Ventnor, on the Jersey coast, the day after I wrote you and left a note on her door saying

she would return next week. I have no way of finding her address there, and I must wait - and ask you to wait until she returns. It has been unconscionably hot here, and I do not blame her for leaving; however, it is not good business practice.

I see your letter through the chink in her mailbox; also, what might be a telegram. If you sent her one, both are still unopened. When she returns, I shall dispatch the four manuscripts to you via airmail, registered; and see to it that neither check is cashed until we hear from you. That is, unless Miss Seoy has

funds available to remit to you  
apart from this.

I almost closed this  
letter without thanking you for  
~~my~~ commission.

Respectfully,  
Charles Weisberg  
2354 N. Park Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dr. Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Nat'l Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

July 20, 1938

Mr. Charles Weisberg  
2354 North Park Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

My dear Mr. Weisberg:

Of course we regret that some immediate action could not have been taken with reference to the autograph for which we sent the check last week, but we realize things do not always go just as we may wish.

Enclosed you will please find photostat copy of the exact writing which Lincoln prepared on the little note book which is supposed to be among the items we have acquired. Will you please make comparison between this photostat and the copy in possession of Miss Sevy.

In case there is not an exact similarity of course we would not care to acquire any of the material.

We will thank you indeed for looking after our interest with reference to the acquisition of the item, and if the document does not seem to be genuine we shall of course expect to have our check returned immediately.

Thanking you for your past favors, we are

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB  
Enc. (1)

Director



September 7, 1938

Mr. Charles Weisberg  
Hotel Clinton  
Tenth & Clinton Sts.  
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your letter and I hope you will not feel that we are at all pressing you for the return of the \$5.00 which you may send at your convenience.

If your friend, however, Mr. Ward has from 50 to 75 Lincoln manuscripts and letters I am sure that it is too large a collection for us to attempt to handle as we do not have a large appropriation which naturally would run up into the thousands of dollars if they are original letters.

We would like, however, very much to get the dates of these letters and the names of the men to whom they are written as I am sure that is all we would be interested in at present to learn whether or not the letters have been published and if we do not acquire them ourselves possibly we could find a buyer.

With respect to the autographs in the hands of Miss Levy I do not think we would question the authenticity of any of them except the Lincoln autograph.

Inasmuch as we sent you a photographic copy of the original and which appeared to be somewhat different than the copy in Miss Levy's hands thought that was sufficient evidence for us to withhold the purchase price.

Possibly you may not know that the original was written in pencil, not in ink and I understand has been copied and offered for sale on several occasions so we are rather sceptical about the whole thing. We would be interested to know whether or not the copy Miss Levy has was written in ink or pencil.

Very truly yours,

LAWW  
L.A.Warren

Director

PAPERS

37/698

10.2 *Scutellaria* *lanceolata*

Mr. Charles Weisberg September 7, 1938

P.S. We will be pleased to see the book of photographs when it arrives and thank you very much for sending it.

5. THE SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION FOR THE PRACTICE OF  
LAW, AND SO A S.L.A.W. IN THIS FIELD, IS NOT SO MUCH  
ONE OF THE LARGEST AS IT IS OF THE LEAST, SO IN CONSEQUENCE  
OF THE LARGEST NUMBER OF STUDENTS SO IN CONSEQUENCE

卷之三

и създава съдържанието на тези съчинения като външна форма на писаната реч.

IT CAN BE PREDICTED THAT

16. 10. 1955. 10. 10. 1955. 10. 10. 1955. 10. 10. 1955.

1. I have a few more things to say about the new economy. One of the most important is that it's not just about technology; it's also about how we live our lives.

卷之三

1977-2000  
1987-1990  
1991-1993  
1994-1998

Digitized by srujanika@gmail.com

THE REAL ESTATE TRUST COMPANY  
OF PHILADELPHIA

S. E. CORNER BROAD AND CHESTNUT STREETS

September 27, 1938

Lincoln National Life Foundation Co.,  
c/o Lincoln National Bank and Trust Company,  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Att: Mr. Louis A. Warren

Gentlemen:

There was deposited with us on or about July 19, 1938, a check of your Company on the Lincoln National Bank and Trust Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana, in the amount of \$100.00, drawn to the order of Rachel Levy. This check was returned to us by your bank with the notation, "Payment Stopped".

In the meantime, however, before the item was returned, we had paid a check in the amount of \$48.50, principally because we felt that there could be no question about the payment of your obligation. The return of this item unpaid resulted in an overdraft of \$51.28 in the account of Rachel Levy, which we have not as yet been able to recover.

Would you be willing to advise me whether or not this transaction of yours with Mrs. Levy would have resulted in a total loss of this \$100.00 if the item had been paid by your bank? We were given to understand by Mrs. Levy that there was some misunderstanding relative to the contract for which this check was issued and it would help us if we could ascertain now that you received no value whatever in the transaction. If there should be any equity in your deal with Mrs. Levy which you would still have in your possession would you be willing to reimburse us to that extent.

I shall very much appreciate your answer.

Very truly yours,

*H. A. Raynor*  
H. A. Raynor  
Vice President

HAR:s

*Fingeries*

September 30, 1938

Mr. H. A. Raynor, Vice President  
The Real Estate Trust Company  
South East Corner Broad and Chestnut Streets  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

My dear Mr. Raynor:

We regret exceedingly that you have been inconvenienced by the failure of Mrs. Levy to keep sufficient funds in the bank to take care of her current expenses, as we understand the item which was offered to us for \$100.00 was sold to some one else at a better price. Therefore, it is apparent that the money received for the item she priced to us was not used to set aside the check which we forwarded to her when she found we had stopped payment.

After we had forwarded her a check for \$100.00 in payment for Lincoln autographs which she claimed to have had, we learned almost immediately after sending the check that apparently her Lincoln documents are not genuine, and we immediately stopped payment and advised her why we were doing it.

You will observe that we have nothing at all in our possession from Mrs. Levy and, as I have indicated, we have been informed that the manuscripts were sold to some one else.

We would have been very glad to keep our part of the contract if the items which were to have been received had been guaranteed as genuine.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director

3  
SAMUEL MOYERMAN  
P. O. Box 2412  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Sept. 7, 1940.

Dr. Louis A. Warren,  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Dr. Warren:

Hope this finds you well and as active as ever. It came to my attention today that the Argosy Book Store of 114 E. 59th St. N.Y. City is offering for sale some Civil War papers consisting of military orders. They state that some of the orders signed by Lincoln shed new light on Lincoln and disclose heretofore unknown matters.

Only recently after I had bought about 500 papers that are supposed to have come from the Estate of W.W.H. Davis and very very valuable actually originated in a junk shop owned by Mr Bender whom I have known for 20 years. (I wrote to you about his 7 year old boy recently) A fellow by name of Weissberg also known as "The Baron" (from fact he wore a goatee when arrested some years ago and looked like a baron and so posed) bought much of the material from the junk shop in question just year before I knew they had it. Mr Weissberg has peddled this material all over Phila. and N.Y. Some of it was sold to Argosy by Weissberg. Now Argosy has stated they found in these Davis papers the said new material on Lincoln. Weissberg is the cleverest forger of our time almost. I know him personally but keep 40 miles away from him and never deal with him. He also avoids me as I hate fellows who thrive on forged autographs. Weissberg at one time at Un of Pa had highest I.Q. so we are dealing with a genius in his line and who is slick enough to avoid jail sentences except small one few years ago. He has stuck local historical societies plenty. He always puts "flavor" in his autographs. He has a fair knowledge of history. I am much interested in putting stop to his machinations. I am enclosing few of Davis autographs I have. You may make photostats of them and return them or you may have them at 25cts each. I feel that eventually you or your friends will be offered some of these Lincoln items and you may get stuck if not on your guard. Davis became a Brig. General later so that he could have contact with Lincoln thru his high office. Keep this confidential and let me have your thoughts on the matter.

Sincerely yours



~~S. M. O'LEARY~~  
ANTIENT LAW BOOK COMPANY  
P. O. BOX 2412,  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

9/8/00

I have a war order  
purported to be signed  
by a Lincoln. If I send  
it to you would you tell  
me of its genuine?

September 12, 1940

Mr. Samuel Moyerman  
P. O. Box 2412  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Moyerman:

Thank you very much for your letter of September 7, 1940 giving further advice about our friend who seems to make a business of forging historical documents.

We have gathered here through the years several forged items which have cost us from \$2.00 to \$3.00 each but as yet I think we have not been fooled on any of them and we would be interested in picking up such forgeries as can be bought cheaply not only to get them off of the market but to add to our interesting exhibit of forged documents.

My impression is that the gentleman you speak about is the one who has been causing so much trouble among Lincoln collectors. Just how to bring him to justice I would not know how to go about it but it is greatly to be regretted that he is allowed to continue his work.

If he is the same man that wrote one or two items that have come into our hands I might say that they are exceedingly fine as far as Lincoln writings are concerned, so much so that for a time one or two of them had us fooled.

We would be pleased to have you send for our approval the war order said to have been signed by Abraham Lincoln as we also had one offered to us I think of the same nature a week or two ago. It might be the same one.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director



nal cloth, Buffalo, published for the Author, 1854. First Edition. \$75.00

The author was interpreter for 15 years to Cornplanter and Gov. Blacksnake, chiefs on the Allegheny River, and consequently the book is filled with Indian material not to be found elsewhere.

Extreme edges of binding rubbed.

125

**INDIANS.** Waemboeshkaa, a Chippeway Chief. Superb Colored Portrait after the Painting by C. B. King. (M'Kenney & Hall). Large folio, 20 x 14½". Phila., 1836 (1837). \$5.00

Chief of the Sandy Lake Band. His portrait shows him wearing a kingly crown (this was his own idea) and smoking a pipe.

126

**IOWA.** Cox, Thos. By Harvey Reid. Port. Iowa City, 1909. \$2.00

127

**IOWA.** Hall, Augustus (Member of Congress from Ia., 1855-7; Chief Justice of Nebraska). Autograph Letter Signed, to Sec. of the Navy, recommending Wm. McCullough for Annapolis. 1 p., 4to. Wash., May 28, 1856. \$3.50

He was appointed. FIRST NAVAL CADET FROM IOWA?

128

#### Three Lost Counties

**IOWA MAP.** Iowa. (C. W. Morse). Colored. 13½ x 16¾". (N. Y., 1856). \$3.50

Scarce cereographic map. BANCROFT CO. has been absorbed in Kossuth; and HUMBOLDT in Kossuth & Webster; FOX CO. is now Calhoun—since 1850. Many Railroads built; only projected railroads in s.e. SIX RAILROADS CROSS THE STATE, E. TO W.

129

#### Indian Map

**(IOWAS).** Map of the Country formerly occupied by the IOWAY TRIBE OF INDIANS, from the Map made by Wawnonque-skoona, an Ioway Brave. Drawn by Capt. S. Eastman, U. S. Army. Engr. by S. Williams. 9 x 12" (Phila., 1851). \$3.50

Showing their villages in S. D., Neb., Kans. Ia., Mo. & Illinois areas.

From Schoolcraft's " . . . Indian Tribe." Stamp erased.

130

**(JAY TREATY).** Debates in the House of Representatives of the U. S. during the First Session of the 4th Congress. Parts 1 & 2. 2 vols., 8vo, ½ calf. Phila., pr. for Benj. Franklin Bache, 1796-1808. \$10.00

Part 1, Constitutional Powers of the House with respect to Treaties; part 2, Questions involved in the British Treaty of 1794.

131

**JUVENILE.** Aesop, Junior, in America: being a Series of Fables, written especially for the People of the United States. Illus. N. Y., 1834. \$3.50

132

**JUVENILE.** Hive (The) or a Collection of Thoughts on Civil, Moral, Sentimental & Religious Subjects, intended as a Repository of sententious, ingenious and pertinent sayings in verse and prose to which Youth may have recourse . . . 24mo, calf. N. Y., 1795. Scarce. \$10.00

132a  
**KANSAS.** Quantrill & the Border Wars. By W. E. Connelley. Maps & Illus. Tall 8vo. Cedar Rapids, 1910. \$5.00

The Quantrill family of Md., pp. 17-42; nine chapters on the Lawrence Massacre. Quantrill fought in Kansas, Missouri and Kentucky.

A Kansan's account, but fully documented.

133

**KANSAS.** Stone, Robt. Lincoln; Address before Topeka Hi-Twelve Club, 9 Feb. 1927. 15pp., wrappers. Topeka, (1927). \$2.00

134

**The Kansas of 1873**  
**KANSAS MAP.** Asher & Adams' Kansas. Colored. Wide double-folio, 17½ x 24". (N. Y.), c. 1873. \$2.50

Shows Gove County (supposedly created 1879).

135

**Kentucky Families**  
**KENTUCKY.** Green, Thos. M. Historic Families of Kentucky: with special reference to Stocks immediately derived from the Valley of Virginia, tracing in detail their various Genealogical connections & illustrating from Historic Sources their influence upon the political and social development of Ky. & the states of the South & West. Port. 8vo, original Cloth. Cinn., 1889. First Edition. Fine Copy. \$25.00

The McDowells; the Logans; the Allens; with related families.

136

#### Masonry in Kentucky

**KENTUCKY.** Louisville. Morris, M. W. Rob. Address upon the Revival of the Genuine Masonic Spirit in Louisville, before a Large Convention of the Masonic Fraternity at the Masonic Temple, Louisville 30 Oct. 16pp., 8vo, wrappers. Louisville, 1858. \$4.00

And see #138.

137

**KENTUCKY.** Muhlenberg County. History, by Otta A. Rothert. Illus. Tall 8vo, Louisville, 1913. Fine Copy. \$10.00

Well indexed.

History, local traditions, folklore, genealogy: chapters devoted to Tobacco; Coal Mines and Iron Ore; Slavery days.

138

**KENTUCKY.** Swigert, M. W. Philip. Address to the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1858. 14pp., wrappers. Frankfort, Ky., 1858. \$3.00

A synopsis of his work as executive officer of the Lodge.

139

#### Great Map

**KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE.** By H. S. Tanner. Engraved by H. S. Tanner and assistants. Colored. 23½ x 31". Phila., c. 1823. \$7.50

Revised Second Issue of this important Map, which supplies so much more data than any earlier one, drawn from every source. Shows all the ROADS. Shows HICKMAN, CALLOWAY, GRAVES & McCRAKEN Counties, in the west, in their original locations.

The KENTUCKY of early 1823).

140

**Uniquely Interesting Signed Autograph Presentation from Abraham Lincoln As Commander-in-Chief**

**(LINCOLN).** Instructions for Officers on Outpost and Patrol Duty. Abridged from Colonel Arentshild, by an Officer of the Adjutant General's Department. Foreword by Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War. 24pp., original printed wrappers. Washington, March 25, 1862. \$500.00

On front cover, in ink, a 7-line Autograph Presentation Signed:

"APRIL 2, 1862.

GEN. CASEY:

I SEND YOU THIS COPY FOR YOUR OPINION AND ANY SUGGESTION YOU CARE TO MAKE—

YOURS VERY TRULY

A. LINCOLN."

In 1861 General Casey had served at and near Washington, organizing volunteer troops, and in this service doubtless came into contact with the anxious President. Further, his own SYSTEM OF INFANTRY TACTICS, published in 1861, was widely used by the Army. These circumstances, and the fact that the "Instructions" was originally designed mainly for cavalry, clearly indicate Lincoln's reasons for sending the General a preliminary, proof issue, with this earnest request for aid in fitting it to an extended purpose.

Two months later, General Casey was promoted for his services at FAIR OAKS, despite unjust reflections upon his troops' part in that great battle by McClellan—who himself might have turned it into a conclusive victory.

ONLY ONE OTHER SIGNED AUTOGRAPH PRESENTATION BY LINCOLN HAS BEEN DISCLOSED BY A SEARCH OF AUCTION AND DEALERS' CATALOGUES. It however, carried merely the names of the donor and of Lincoln, and bore no relation to the war or to Lincoln's career.

141

**LINCOLN.** Bruno's Weekly. Lincoln as seen by the Cartoonists of his time. Wrappers. N. Y., 1916. \$2.00

142

**LINCOLN.** Hertz, Emanuel (Editor). Abraham Lincoln, the Tribute of the Synagogue. Illus. (703pp.), 8vo. N. Y., 1927. \$7.50

Unknown or forgotten tributes of the Jewish People, especially their leaders and rabbis.

143

**The Lambert Sale Catalogue**

**LINCOLN.** Lambert, Maj Wm. H. Priced Catalogue of his Library. 5 parts, bound together, 8vo, cloth, wrappers bound in. N. Y., 1914. \$12.50

The most extensive collection on Lincoln and the Civil War ever assembled. The 4392 lots, of books, manuscripts, broadsides, medals, portraits and reliques required 16 sessions and realized \$211,000.00. The catalogue of his great Thackeray collection is included.

145

**LINCOLN, Abraham.** We have just acquired a collection of Manuscript Writings of Abraham Lincoln which include Autograph Letters, Unknown and unpublished Endorsements, in relation to many military topics of Civil War years, an unknown military order, &c., all throwing new light on Lincoln. These were found among the

papers of General Wm. W. H. Davis of Doylestown, Pa., preserved entire and intact from Civil War Days. We are offering these as a collection or each item separately. Correspondence invited.

146a

**LOUISIANA.** Annual Circular, Medical College of Louisiana, 1843-4. 7pp., wrappers. New Orleans, 1843. Scarce. \$3.50

146

**LOUISIANA.** American Historical Association. Annual Report for 1903. 2 vols., thick 8vo, Wash. 1904. \$4.00  
\*\*Contains THE AARON BURR CONSPIRACY AT NEW ORLEANS; WORLD ASPECTS OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE, etc. The second vol. consists wholly of CORRESPONDENCE OF THE FRENCH MINISTERS TO THE U. S., 1791-97. This includes much on LOUISIANA and Jefferson. Indexed.

147

**LOUISIANA.** Johnston, J. S. (of La.) Letter to a Gentleman in N. Y. in reply to an article on the expediency of Reducing the Duty on Sugar, particularly in relation to its effect upon the commercial & Navigation Interests of that city. 8pp. Wash., 1831. \$2.50

148

**LOUISIANA.** Phillips, U. B. (Compiler). The revised Statutes of Louisiana. (705pp.), 8vo. New Orleans, 1856. \$5.00

Includes the Black Code; laws relating to Tobacco and its inspection; etc.

149

**LOUISIANA.** Plan of New Orleans, the Capital of Louisiana. R. Benning, Sculp. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". London, Apr. 1761. \$5.00 Shows every street and house of the town's 36 blocks, in which there were many houses not facing the streets, and many courtyards and gardens.

150

**Buchon's Map**

**LOUISIANA MAP.** Carte Geographique, Statistique et Historique de la Louisiane. Engr. by B. de Beaupre. Colored. 21x27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Paris, (1825). Rare. Choice copy. \$10.00 Second European Map of the State of Louisiana. Text in margins. The La. of 1822. Much detail. Shows Roads, old names of Streams.

151

**MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.** Collections. Vol. 4. 8vo. Portland, 1856. \$3.00 Historical articles include: Sandy River Settlement; the Language of the Abnaquies or Eastern Indians; Letter from Gen. Washington to Gen. Knox 1789; an account of the first Woolen manufactory established in the U. S.

151a

**The Portland Hunchback**

**MAINE.** Brief Sketch of the Life & Sufferings of LEONARD TRASK. Illus. 48pp., orig. pict. wrappers (frayed). Portland, 1858. Very scarce. \$3.50

Through a series of misbaps, Trask became so hunchbacked that his height was reduced from six feet to less than five.

152

**Revolutionary Period Map**

**MAINE.** (Mount Desert Island.—Frenchmen's Bay). (Atlantic Neptune). Publ. by

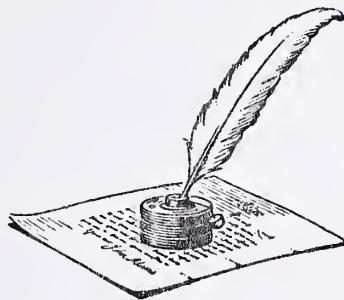
WE PAY POSTAGE IN U. S.

WEISBERG, CHARLES

AUTOGRAPHS:  
A KEY TO COLLECTING

BY

MARY A. BENJAMIN



CORRECTED AND REVISED, WITH A NEW PREFACE  
AND A SELECTED LIST OF REFERENCE WORKS

NEW YORK

WALTER R. BENJAMIN AUTOGRAPHS

1963

deceive, wrote with great skill and often with high artistry, and their work accordingly justified what high praise it received.

The intentional forger, however, acts from different motives, some more blameworthy than others. The most reprehensible is that which, as in the instances of "Antique" Smith, Denis-Lucas, Alberti, Spring, von Gerstenbergk, Byron, Cosey, and Weisberg, arose from a desire for financial gain. Other forgers, such as Chatterton and Ireland, were prompted by personal ambition; and still others, among whom are Bertram and Cunningham, by that curious form of arrested maturity which leads adults to perpetrate hoaxes. Those in the latter two classes are more the problem of the scholar and historian, but those of the first are the particular concern and worry of experts, dealers, criminologists and the law itself.

There is a saying that if a man is worth while, time will discover him; if he is no good, time will uncover him. The same applies to those who try to counterfeit autographs. Anachronisms are the rock on which the forger generally founders. Today the knowledge of paper, ink, water-marks, scripts and other factors has become so perfected that the expert need not rely solely on such time errors to detect a forgery. By means of many newly discovered methods, he is able to date the materials used with surprising accuracy and to give their source and origin. Nevertheless, the field has continuously proved lucrative for the forger, since there are always those who are unequipped to recognize his work. It is for them that he floods the market with spurious Washingtons and Franklins, Longfellows and Blakes, Shelleys and Byrons, Lincolns and Marshalls, Scotts and Dickens, Poes, Fields and Burns.

The Chattertons, Irelands, Bertrams and Cunninghams resembled the Sophists, at least in the fact that they possessed great literary talent. None of them copied authentic manuscripts word for word in an assumed hand. They did not need, in a sense, to imitate script, nor was special ink or quality of paper too much their concern, since there were few authorities in their day to question these. The renown of Thomas Chatterton, who committed suicide in 1770 at the pathetic age of seventeen, is

them there "leaped out" sentences which he immediately recognized had been lifted verbatim from a magazine article by his father Lord Palgrave, the English anthologist. Advance copies were recalled, and publication abandoned. The Shelley forgeries were in almost all other details as singularly well executed as the Byron forgeries. So also were the Keats forgeries, some of which were addressed to "My dear Woodhouse," who was well known as this poet's intimate, and they had excellent imitations of Keats' motto and seal with clasped hands. Next, in fairly short order, the majority of this considerable body of letters of the three English poets, many of them now in the safekeeping of the British Museum, was incontestably proved to be spurious. Considering George Gordon Byron's career in England, it is not impossible and more likely probable that he may have channeled additional false material into the hands of private collectors in America.

Although Lord Byron, Shelley and Keats manuscripts should always be sharply examined, for no one can tell when and where doubtful ones may appear, other forgeries are equally important to the American autograph collector. Among these must be mentioned the work of Alexander Howland Smith, Joseph Cosey and Charles Weisberg. The first, at one time a clerk in Scotland, operated in the 1890's and began with a fraudulent Robert Burns A. L. S. Later, from an apparently unlimited supply, he sold autographs of such historic personages as Mary, Queen of Scots, Darnley, Bothwell, the Stuart Kings, Prince Charles, Oliver Cromwell, Edmund Burke and William Pitt. Although he was overtaken and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, irreparable harm had been done, and his forgeries, of which a number had been auctioned off at Dowell's in Edinburgh, took a high toll of victims. Among the victims was the distinguished and generous patron of arts, John S. Kennedy, Trustee of the New York Public Library, who had bought and later presented these unauthenticities to that and other American institutions. The Library on request will still show over two hundred Smith-forged letters and manuscripts obtained from its Trustee. The *Annual Burns Chronicle*\* also states that the

\* Series 2, Vol. xvi, 1941, Article by John S. Clarke, pp. 24-30.

es which he immediately recognized from a magazine article by hisish anthologist. Advance copies abandoned. The Shelley forgeries singularly well executed as the Keats forgeries, some of which, "odhouse," who was well known had excellent imitations of Keats' ends. Next, in fairly short order, body of letters of the three Engin in the safekeeping of the British lived to be spurious. Considering in England, it is not impossible e may have channeled additional private collectors in America. by and Keats manuscripts should no one can tell when and where forgeries are equally important collector. Among these must be Alexander Howland Smith, Joseph The first, at one time a clerk in's and began with a fraudulent on an apparently unlimited supply historic personages as Mary, Shewell, the Stuart Kings, Prince Edmund Burke and William Pitt. d sentenced to a year's imprisonment done, and his forgeries, of off at Dowell's in Edinburgh. Among the victims was the man of arts, John S. Kennedy, Library, who had bought and to that and other American will still show over two manuscripts obtained from <sup>the</sup> article\* also states that the <sup>the</sup> *Book Collector*, pp. 24-30.

Earl of Rosebery and the late John Gribbel, whose magnificent collections of autographs have been auctioned off in recent years, were both fooled by the same forger.

For his time, Smith, who was quickly dubbed "Antique" Smith, probably reached a high-water mark in the forger's skill, depending more on accurate calligraphy than on the cruder methods of tracing or drawing. He moreover carefully chose the paper he used, selecting that of the proper period correctly water-marked. This he obtained from genuine quartos and folios, theological books and similar works. He frequently stained his sheets with weak tea, coffee or tobacco juice, and also doctored the ink. In these attempts at simulation he was careless, and, inevitably, they proved his downfall. Only those who ignored the missing testimony of naturally aged paper and ink and who judged entirely by script could have been duped. That he was, however, one of the most able script forgers is indisputable, a fact to which many an unsuspecting collector can sadly testify.

Cosey and Weisberg, who both were extremely skilled in their shady occupation, have cast their shadows even further over the modern scene. Examples of old forgeries are still occasionally offered for sale, but the work of these two criminals, who were operating in the last decade, have literally flooded the market. It is not positively known that they have ceased operation, and for this reason, if no other, it is well for American collectors especially to become acquainted in more detail with their activities.

Cosey, the name by which he is generally referred to, according to an article in the *New York Sun*, November 13, 1941, has a career checkered with jail terms and convictions—nine in all, for grand larceny, carrying concealed weapons, forging checks and various other crimes. He is known, like "Antique" Smith, for his great skill, and, in addition, for the inordinate pride he took in his forgeries. He began, as he admitted to Mr. G. William Bergquist, Special Investigator of the New York Public Library, whose tact and patience were largely responsible for the full exposure of both Cosey and Weisberg, with stealing from the Congressional Library a pay warrant signed by Benjamin Franklin. This he offered to a book dealer, who scorn-

Jefferson," presumably written

thing for me to do but add my  
I myself have endorsed the  
ever,

G. Washington

from Washington City:

which was kindly given to me by  
examine figures 1 to 9 and all  
of 11, 12 & 13 you will see the  
of which we are speaking. I  
General, and he expressed a  
finished with it.

Boston has promised to send me  
and coins used in the period  
these are very fine steel engravings  
of some aid to you in your

Very sincerely,

P. Henry

Cosey's methods of marketing.  
He was offering a Lincoln, or  
offered a paper with the re-  
cipient's collar and knew nothing  
about anything of interest?" His  
method of executing forgery  
was to copy the signer's writing  
and to the conclusion  
under the circumstances of responsibility over

Equal to the work of Cosey as a menace is that of Charles Weisberg, but, on the whole, the latter was in no way as shrewd, deft or prolific. His work as a forger was far from good. Only Cosey in the more recent past is distinguished for that pains-taking care which characterized many of his predecessors. Weisberg, unlike Cosey, regarded his victims as thoroughly credulous. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he had an excellent record as a student of American history and literature, he executed forgeries of Washington, Walt Whitman, Heinrich Heine and others, but in the *Publishers' Weekly* of August 11, 1934, his arrest was announced. At that time the New York post office revealed that he, operating under the name of Kane, had victimized a number of book dealers. Kane was only one of his aliases—he has bobbed up as Dr. Charles Levitt and Brand Storm, and probably under many other names. A personable man in his forties, his associates dubbed him "Baron" because of his pleasant and agreeable manner.

The records show that in 1933 Weisberg served a three-months sentence for forging a postal money-order, and in 1935 he was given a year and a half for using the mails to defraud. For the same offense he received two and a half years in 1941. Released, he resumed his interrupted career under the alias Brand Storm, was apprehended and indicted, but jumped bail. Once more arrested in February 1945, he was again sentenced to a two-and-a-half-year stretch. Auction houses, autograph collectors and dealers alike rejoice over the event, their only regret being that his sojourn behind bars is not permanent.

The modern forgeries of these two men, Cosey and Weisberg, as well as of others less notorious, doubtless netted them a fairly comfortable income if one can judge by the number of spurious items which appear in out-of-the-way small auction houses and antique shops and at stamp auctions. So common have such frauds become that many who actually handle them frequently do not bother to call attention to them. Whereas genuine Washingtons and Lincolns admittedly are not rare, still they are not so plentiful that, when they are included in a miscellaneous collection of stamps, they merit no mention at all.

